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The Chinese Communes

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Tao Teh Ching—A.I.T. 1.

By John C. H. Wu

Introduction by

Arthur W. Hummel

John C. H. Wu occupies a unique position among the interpreters of the Chinese thought; long a student of the *Tao Teh Ching*, his work enables us to experience anew the original vision of the Chinese author Lao Tzu. Dr. Wu's translation emerges as a closer and deeper interpretation of this superb classic of the Chinese thought tradition which has given the Chinese people their deepest experiences of reality and has been inspiring their art and literature for over 2500 years.

The former head of the Oriental Division of the Library of Congress expressed his appreciation of this *Tao Teh Ching* in these words: "In addition to competence in the Chinese language, Dr. Wu possesses two endowments necessary to a translator of this text: a practical understanding of men and institutions, and an appreciation of mysticism in its highest and best sense."

Along with this English translation of this *Tao Teh Ching*, and to enable the students of the Chinese language and humanism to have an all-inclusive vision of this classic, the Chinese text is given.

The *Tao Teh Ching* has, indeed, become a classic of world literature and philosophy; it is a prescribed reading for all those who share in the wider and deeper vision of Humanism.

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The Chinese Communes

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SINCE the Communists gained control of the Chinese mainland ten years ago, there have occurred many drastic changes. Most revolutionary of all, however, is the establishment and enforcement of the commune system, which represents a phase of life hitherto unknown in the history of China, and, indeed, of mankind. This new system, assuming monumental human proportions, has great bearing not only on the fate of Red China, but also on the future development of Communism as a whole.

The history of the people's commune in Communist China began in April, 1958, when the Chinese Communists experimented with this new system in three mainland provinces. Obviously satisfied with the results, Peiping launched, in late April of the same year, an all-out campaign to establish people's communes throughout mainland China.

By the end of September, 1958, barely two months after the commune system was enforced on a nation-wide basis, 121,936,350 households were herded into 26,425 communes. They represent 99% of Communist China's total peasant population plus millions of city dwellers. Peiping, the capital of the Regime, has 56 communes embracing all its 663,124 households. Metropolitan Shanghai has 23 communes comprising 256,000 households. In 15 provinces, the people have joined the communes one hundred percent. In seven other provinces, from 92% to 99.4% of the population have joined. Only three outlying provinces have fallen behind: Ninghsia—67.3%, Sinkiang—59.3% and Yunnan—31%, because of the "autonomous rule" of minority races in these regions. A breakdown of the communes throughout the nation, up to October, 1958, is shown as follows:¹

¹ *Statistical Work*, No. 20 (1959). Official bimonthly publication of the State Statistical Bureau, Peiping.

Municipalities or Provinces	No. of Communes	No. of Participating Households		No. of Households in Each Commune
		No. of Households	Percentage of Peasants	
Peiping				
Municipality	56	663,124	100	11,841
Shanghai				
Municipality	23	256,000	100	11,130
Hupei	951	8,402,639	100	8,836
Inner Mongolia	812	1,561,023	98.6	1,922
Liaoning	428	3,264,579	100	7,642
Kirin	481	1,914,547	100	3,980
Heilungkiang	718	1,946,478	100	2,710
Shensi	1,673	3,232,904	100	1,932
Kansu	794	2,006,389	100	2,527
Tsinghai	144	245,624	100	2,456
Ninghsia	53	201,815	67.3	3,808
Sinkiang	389	625,151	59.3	1,607
Shantung	1,580	11,347,989	100	7,182
Kiangsu	1,490	9,127,334	99.4	6,126
Anwei	1,054	7,219,244	100	6,849
Chekiang	761	5,697,412	100	7,487
Hunan	1,285	10,272,517	100	7,994
Fukien	622	2,672,839	95.1	4,267
Hopei	729	6,040,000	96.1	8,286
Honan	1,284	8,172,440	100	6,365
Kiangsi	1,240	3,720,000	92.0	3,000
Kwangtung	803	7,905,553	100	9,845
Kwangsi	784	4,041,944	100	5,165
Szechwan	4,827	13,676,988	99.1	2,833
Kweichow	2,194	3,101,205	94.5	1,413
Yunnan	275	1,137,148	31.0	4,135
Total	26,425	121,936,350	98.2	4,614

What is a commune?

Before the Chinese Communists enforced the commune system, the Communist *hsiang* government² had charge of the administration, while the cooperatives concentrated on production. In this way, the administrative and the production teams were kept distinct and separate. With the enforcement of the new system, both tasks were given to the commune. Political and economic functions formed a single entity, with the Party controlling the entire structure.

A typical example is the Communist "Sputnik People's Commune"

² The Communist *hsiang* corresponds roughly to a midwestern American township but usually is more densely populated.

of Shui-ping Hsien, Honan Province. It was organized in April, 1958, with the merging of 27 agricultural producer cooperatives in four *hsiang* areas. The commune embraced over 9,300 households with 43,000 persons. The provisional regulations of the commune make the most comprehensive document to date of the organization and functioning of people's communes.³

Under this system, deputies to the *hsiang* people's congress are at the same time deputies to the commune congress. Members of the *hsiang* "people's committee," i.e., the government, act concurrently as members of the commune administrative committee. The *hsiang* Communist Party secretary is, in most cases, the commune director who controls everything.

Under the commune director are a number of staff departments, in charge of agriculture, water conservation, forestry, animal husbandry, fisheries, industry and communication, interior and labor, finance and food, armed defense, commerce, culture and education, science, political affairs, sanitation, etc.

The backbone of the commune is its vast labor force. In principle, everybody has to join the commune. In bigger communes, the labor units are called regiments, battalions, companies, platoons and squads, just as in a military force. In other communes, they are simply known as "big groups" and "small groups." Throughout these groups there are Communist Party or Youth Corps cells to "lead" the laborers.

All citizens aged 16 and over must join the commune as regular members. Former landlords, rich peasants, "counter-revolutionaries" and disfranchised persons are admitted as "non-regular" members, having no voice at all, though they work harder.

Communes are, in principle, reorganized farm cooperatives. When several agricultural cooperatives are merged into a commune, they turn all their common properties over to the commune. Independent households place their private houses, land holdings, livestock, trees and farm tools under the commune ownership.

Under the commune system, family life virtually disappears. Husbands and wives live in separate dormitories, away from their own children. Seldom are they permitted to stay together, except on a Saturday once every few weeks. For the younger generation, the Communists follow three basic rules: Military pattern organization, combatlike movement, and collective living. Children below nine years are taken into nurseries and kindergartens. Older children live in school dormitories. Middle

³ For a full text of these regulations, see the *People's Daily*, Peiping, Sept. 4, 1958.

school students are organized into "people's communes" of their own. Like the communes for adults, the youngsters' communes follow a set pattern of military organization, with regiments, battalions and companies. Their chief task: labor.

People are no longer free to choose their jobs. One may be a peasant today, and tomorrow be sent to dig coal or to work at a blast furnace. He simply does what the Communists tell him to do. In the initial stage, when the commune system was first enforced, people worked from 14 to 17 hours a day. Whenever the Communists thought it necessary, the commune members were "challenged" to "night battles," which meant toiling till after midnight. The daily working schedule of the Shunhua People's Commune, Kwangtung Province, reads as follows: Rise at 4 A.M.; breakfast; work from 4:30 A.M. till 11:30 A.M.; lunch and break; work again from 1 P.M. to 6 P.M.; supper and brief rest; "night battle" work from 7:30 P.M. till 11:30 P.M. Total work: 16 hours a day. Sleep: 4½ hours.

The Communists themselves give the following account of commune life:

At daybreak, bells were rung, and whistles were blown to assemble. In about a quarter of an hour the peasants lined up. At the command of the company and squad commanders, the teams marched into the fields, holding flags. Here one no longer sees peasants in groups of two or three smoking and going slowly and leisurely to the fields. What one hears are sounds of measured steps, and marching songs. The desultory living habits which had been with the peasants for thousands of years had gone forever. How tremendous a change.

To adapt itself to collective labor and collective life, the commune launched a movement for merging villages and moving from one dwelling to another. Peasants in groups carried their luggage and moved to localities near their jobs. Marvelous is this change. Since ancient times, peasants have treasured their homes, left them by their ancestors, above everything else. Now that private plots, houses and part of one's livestock have come under the commune ownership, all the ties that bind the peasant are broken and they feel relaxed. They said: "It makes no difference where we move. Anyway, we are in our Chaoying home." There is nothing left in their own homes for them to long for. The commune is their home.

Mess halls and nurseries are found in villages. All houses are locked with their dwellers gone to the fields and factories. One can no longer see the phenomenon in which each family does its own cooking and rears its own children. The frames of individual families which had existed for thousands of years have been completely smashed.⁴

⁴ "On the Chaoying Commune, Shangcheng, Honan Province," *China Youth News*, Peiping, Sept. 27, 1958.

In a word, under the commune system people live and work collectively. They are given three meals and a place in which to live, plus some wages, for all the work they do for the Communists. However, the Communists have prepared scales of wages. The *People's Daily* of Peiping, for instance, classified wages into eight grades, ranging from JMP.2 to JMP.6 (U.S. currency \$0.85 to \$2.55) a month.⁵ Before the communes were established, some free marketing was still permitted in mainland China, although most key commodities were exchanged through state-owned enterprises. But in a commune, all purchases and sales are conducted "collectively," that is, in bulk. Commercial dealings among individuals have practically ceased to exist except in bigger cities.

The most ambitious plan of the commune is the military training of the people. Men from 16 to 40 years old form the backbone of the Communist militia force. It backs up a land army second only to Russia's. Men in the 41-50 age bracket are organized into reserves. Young women are also forced to join, working as nurses, litter bearers, couriers, etc. Teenagers below 16 and old men above 50 are put into logistic service. The people's commune in Hsu-shui Hsien of Hupei Province provides a typical example of the militia set up. The commune members have been organized into two regiments, 191 battalions and 666 companies. Every morning, they practice drilling before going to work. After day-long toil, they practice drill again in the evening before taps. Retired Communist officers are given the positions of command in the militia force. But it is always the secretary of the Communist district office who is the real boss.

We may sum up the context of the commune as follows:

1. Everybody has to join the commune.
2. One works from 14 to 17 hours a day.
3. In return one gets three coarse meals a day, plus JMP.2 to JMP.6 (U.S. currency \$0.85 to \$2.55) a month.
4. Virtually no one has a home. Husbands and wives live separately in public dormitories.
5. Parents are seldom allowed to see their children, who live in schools and nurseries to be brought up by the state.
6. People eat at "mess halls." No work, no eat.
7. Every able-bodied person is a soldier.
8. Women take military training as reservists.
9. A person owns nothing except the very personal belongings.

⁵ JMP means *Jen Min Pei* (the People's Currency).

- The Communist Party owns everything and controls everything.
10. People have no freedom to choose their jobs. The Communist Party decides what a person shall do.
 11. Altogether 121,936,350 households, representing 99% of mainland China's rural population and some urban residents, are now herded into 26,425 communes. These are formed by consolidation of small production units—farms and villages—into huge organizations with a central administration of industry, agriculture, trade, education and military affairs. A single commune manages the total activity of several thousand peasant families—sometimes more. In other words, a commune is a self-sustaining community. One individual must perform a variety of functions. Every man is a farmer; every man is a factory worker; every man is a soldier—every man is a slave laborer.

Why communes?

The Chinese Communists enforce the commune system for various reasons. However, the most important reason is political. They seek, through rigidly efficient organizational devices, to tighten the totalitarian rule of the Chinese people. In consequence, the Chinese have become more restless than ever before.

Although we can trace the idea of communes to the historical Paris Commune, it is difficult for us to find anything in the Communist world similar to the system practiced by the Chinese Communists. Engels spoke of militarized communes, but he did not speak of the commune as a unit of government administration and a center of economic activity. Lenin died before the establishment of the collective farm. In fact, Soviet leaders, in the early days of their revolution, did set up a few trial communes; quickly they abandoned them because the Russian people would not tolerate communal living. Thus, Stalin expressed the hope that, when the production of the collective farms was *abundant*, there would be common kitchens, common laundries and other such amenities. In this respect, Red China's Mao Tse-tung thinks and acts differently from the Russian Communists.⁶ Mao decided to enforce the commune system, not because

* The Chinese communes seemed to annoy the Russians—for about three months after the introduction of the new system almost nothing about it appeared in the Soviet press.

the production of the cooperative farms had become *abundant*, but because the production of the agricultural cooperatives had become too *meager*. Mao reasoned that more sacrifices from the peasants and tighter controls over the production would increase the yield in agricultural products. In other words, Mao hoped that through the communes he would be able to organize China's manpower into huge organizations for higher productivity. This is described in an editorial in the *People's Daily* of Peiping⁷ on September 3, 1958:

The establishment of the people's communes has provided good conditions for the further development of the relations of production in the countryside. The expansion of the people's communes and the merger of people's communes and townships into one entity, which facilitates the rapid advance of industry, mining, communications, culture, and education in the rural areas, makes it possible gradually to eliminate the differences between rural and urban areas, between peasants and workers, between peasants and intellectuals, as well as between collective ownership and ownership by the whole people.

The Red hierarchy is thus committed to the communes for transforming rural society through socialism into Communism. This runs counter to the views held by Russia's Nikita S. Khrushchev, who found that "communes are the wrong way to start on the road to socialization."⁸ Differences over internal matters such as the communes cannot, of course, be interpreted as a cause of serious rift between Communist Russia and Communist China. Moscow's aversion to the communes probably has been based mainly on fear that they would not work, endangering, therefore, the whole prospect of Communism in China. So far as Mao Tse-tung was concerned, after the cooperatives had failed, the communes were a logical acknowledgment of that failure. He found that the only way left

⁷ The *People's Daily* is the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of China, and its editorials are binding regulations which must be studied and adhered to by officials everywhere on the Chinese mainland.

⁸ Khrushchev spoke about communes at the Plawace Collective Farm near Poznan, as reported in the Polish Communist Party newspaper *Trybuna Ludu*, July 21, 1959. Among other things, he said: "Soon after the end of the civil war we began to set up communes and not collective farms in our country. Some people argued in the following way, for instance, 'When we fight for communism then let us begin to create communes.' Evidently many people erroneously understood even then what communism is and how it ought to be built." Peiping's recent modification in the communes may have diminished Soviet distaste and apprehension. Mikhail A. Suslov, a member of the Communist Party Presidium and a leading Communist theoretician, who attended the tenth anniversary of the proclamation of the Communist regime in China, made no mention of the communes in his talks, published in the *People's Daily*, Peiping, Sept. 29, 1959.

to continue the socialization of agriculture was a drastic regimentation and a complete dispossession of the rural masses.

But why did the cooperative farms in mainland China fail? Wolf Ladejinsky, a noted expert on agricultural problems, pointed out in his article, "Carrot and Stick in Rural China," that "The collectives created many problems. For peasants used to working in family groups, a collective farm is a new and confusing experience."⁹ The *People's Daily* on December 19, 1956, described, by citing Shantung as a typical example, the "negative attitude" of the peasants towards the cooperatives:

This year the cultivation of winter crops in Shantung province was delayed. Up to the end of November, only 56 percent of the land arable in winter had, in fact, been tilled, in contrast with 89 percent last year. Similarly, there has been little collection of fertilizer and little work on local irrigation. People do not want to dig wells any longer or to build small water tanks.

The answer to such an indifferent mood, given by the Shangtung authorities, was as follows:

- (1) the members of the collective farms are in low spirits and their enthusiasm for production is in abeyance.
- (2) the final end-of-year accounts in the collectives are being held up, and the farmers, even now, do not know what their income for last year's work will turn out to be, and
- (3) the village *kanpu* (cadres) themselves dare not egg on the farmers to work.

A similar situation was portrayed by Peiping's *Kwang Min Jih Pao* (Illustrious Daily News). In its editorial of September 22, 1957, the journal admitted that "although bumper crops were in prospect, harvesting delays were a danger." In listing problems that the cooperative farms were to face, the journal said:

First of all comes the inadequacy of labor and, in some cases, of draft animals, in a number of agricultural producer cooperatives—draft animals that are either too lean and weak or not numerous enough for the purpose on hand.

There is also a shortage of agricultural implements. These are drawbacks that upset a successful and thorough harvest, making ripe crops vulnerable to early frost, typhoons and other natural disasters. And a harvest that is not thoroughly reaped means a decline in production.

⁹ Wolf Ladejinsky, "Carrot and Stick in Rural China," *Foreign Affairs*, Lancaster, Pa., October 1957, p. 99.

The editorial concluded with the warning that "the activism of cooperative members has been impaired and sloppy work in crop gatherings has appeared. Some members have thrown crops here and there and others, while collecting crops, have made them their own." The decline of agricultural production under the cooperative system is thus acknowledged by Chinese Communist leaders themselves. At the nineteen-day closed session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (May 5–May 23, 1958), the official report on agricultural production over the period from the winter of 1955 to the spring of 1958 presented a somewhat darker picture than had been painted earlier and suggested that the adverse effects of mass collectivization on Chinese agriculture might have been greater than originally admitted.¹⁰ On August 18, 1958, the party organ, the *People's Daily* in Peiping, declared that the cooperatives "could not meet the requirements" but instead "had become an obstacle."

The cooperative system failed for several reasons. Most serious was the farmers' lack of private incentive for the collective institution. Enforcement of the landpooling "cooperatives" killed the Chinese family spirit entirely. Besides, there are in this system certain built-in contradictions:

The first was the conflict between the cooperative and the members. Nominally owned by all of its members, the cooperative took away, year after year, a sizable portion of the fruit of their labor in the form of taxes, "voluntary" donations, bonds, grain collection, accumulated funds and public reserve funds. It demanded more work from its members, but paid them considerably less. The peasants, on the other hand, wished to spend more time on their private lots or other cottage industries. This led to all forms of sabotage, slow-down strikes and passive resistance.¹¹ The "back-to-the-land" movement was designed as a convenient instrument to get rid of "dissident elements."¹²

The second contradiction existed among the cooperatives themselves. Conflict of interest was inevitable when each had to consider its own profit. Differences in location, soil fertility and vegetation made some

¹⁰ *The New York Herald Tribune*, June 4, 1958.

¹¹ Lo Jui-ching, Public Security Chief, speaking of the "anti-revolutionary struggle" over the Peiping Radio on January 4, 1958, revealed that "the nation-wide, internal movement for the suppression of counter-revolutionaries was victoriously launched among more than 18 million workers and other personnel between June 1955 and October 1957."

¹² According to Peiping *People's Daily* of November 11, 1957, more than three million students had been sent to provincial areas as "permanent farm workers."

cooperatives better off than the "less privileged" cooperatives, adding further to the discontent of peasants with the latter.

The third contradiction arose between "state farms" and "agricultural cooperatives." The former were occasionally tractor farms, which still needed short-term help from nearby cooperatives. Most of them were staffed by political prisoners serving terms of "reform through labor." The use of political prisoners produced the same kind of conflict with other agricultural cooperatives.

The fourth contradiction was that of the Communist system itself. It existed, and still exists, between Communist cadres and the peasants. The privileged class of Communist party members, particularly those holding key positions in cooperatives, did not share the same hard labor as other cooperative members, but drew far more in wages and supplies. Worse still was the tyrannical attitude of the *kanpu* (cadres) towards the peasants. As Peiping's *Kwang Min Jih Pao* (Illustrious Daily News) put it, "Many village *kanpu* are still acting illegally, searching houses, arresting, torturing, forcing people to marry and embezzling common property. The higher Party officials and Government authorities, knowing this, will not interfere, holding that this is the only way to rule the villages."¹³

It was after this experience with cooperatives that Mao Tse-tung introduced the communes. These were created to remedy the obvious failure of the cooperatives. Instead of meeting the people's dissatisfaction and complaints by relaxing these unnatural demands on the individual, the Red hierarchy reacted characteristically by imposing an even more oppressive system. Six aspects are obvious:

1. *The commune is larger than the cooperative.* In 1957, there were 752,000 cooperatives, consisting of 120 million peasant families. The average cooperative consisted of 158 peasant families. In contrast, the average commune consists of 4,800 peasant families. Therefore, the communes are about thirty times larger than the cooperatives.

2. *Commune members come from all professions.* The cooperatives were composed mainly of peasants. The commune, on the other hand, includes workers, farmers, merchants, students, as well as members of every other profession regardless of sex and age. This includes everyone who is over 16 years of age.

3. *The commune is all-powerful.* The cooperatives allowed each member to possess 5 percent of the land which he tilled to raise his chickens and hogs and to engage in certain small businesses. In other

¹³ *Kwang Min Jih Pao* (Illustrious Daily News), Peiping, July 8, 1956.

words, in the cooperative small amounts of property were allowed. But in the commune no one is allowed to own any land, timber, real property, tools, poultry or other. Everything belongs to the commune. Members are allowed to receive only the bare necessities of life. In other words, the cooperatives left some private ownership. This is entirely gone with the institution of the "all-people ownership system." "All-people" means the Communist Party, and hence "no people," unless the "new class" is meant.

4. *The commune has full power of distribution.* The cooperative paid each member according to his work and gave him either money or food. But the commune system pays half in money and half in food—called "half-supply and half-wage system." Each member goes to a public dining room, at a fixed time, for each meal. The small stoves in the homes of the farmers have been destroyed.

5. *Collective work and collective life.* The cooperative system simply practiced collective production while the peasants were allowed to have a family life. The commune system represents the end of individuality. It has destroyed the family system on the farms. Men work and live completely on a collectivized basis.

6. *Labor and militarism.* Each commune is organized into a military unit. Each member is required to be not only a laborer but also a soldier. Everyone is constantly under military and political discipline. The commune emphasizes: (a) political indoctrination, (b) military training and (c) manual labor. In a word, the commune is the governing body, military group and production and distribution unit.

The purpose of the commune is to increase productivity, by squeezing more work hours out of the impoverished Chinese people. By the end of 1957—the final year of the first Five Year Plan—the Communist rulers found themselves in a dilemma. They realized that, at the pace they were then moving, it would be exceedingly difficult for them to build a modern economy in this generation. Hence the effort in the communes to make a "great leap forward."

All through 1958, the Communist officials developed continuous propaganda about this "great leap forward" in agricultural and industrial production, which called for more manpower and a greater degree of organization and collectivization. Local organizations got more autonomy, more latitude in diverting funds for small projects and more responsibility. Irrigation projects, small fertilizer and cement plants, farm tool workshops, crude hydroelectric stations, road building and a hundred-and-one things were to be launched. The original agricultural cooperatives could not undertake these enterprises. It was, therefore, necessary to reorganize

them into *hsien* (township), called "*hsien* united commune." The operation of such large communes for agricultural purposes necessarily demanded an exceedingly larger supply of manpower.

The "great leap forward" put a great strain on industrial production, particularly iron and steel. Everywhere in rural villages, factories, schools, military installations as well as cities, people were clustered like ants to erect crude blast furnaces, to turn out pig iron and the lowest grade of steel. This resulted in numerous casualties because of the total absence of safety precautions. Since May, 1958, "an army of 60,000,000 participated daily in the iron-steel battle," according to the *Peiping People's Daily*. Aside from being the most backward and wasteful undertaking of the century, it further aggravated the manpower shortage created by the agricultural "great leap forward." Additional sources of labor supply were needed. These were found in the millions of Chinese women. On the surface, they were "liberated" from homes and kitchens; in reality, they were condemned to the most severe types of manual labor.

In addition to these political and economic reasons, there were social and cultural reasons which led Mao to intensify his efforts to enforce the commune system.

The rulers in Peiping realized that the social and cultural forces in the Chinese tradition constituted a great obstacle to the successful operation of Communism in China. Most powerful of all these was the family.

To understand China's family system is to understand China. Throughout the ages, the family, which has been the unit of Chinese society, is the starting point for all moral conduct in Chinese tradition. According to Confucius, the social life of man is governed by five relations: father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, friend and friend, prince and minister. Among these five human relationships, four are occupied with the family.¹⁴

Prior to the Communist control of mainland China, these human relations were closely observed. Children at an early age were taught their first lessons in social relations, the necessity of mutual adjustment, self-control, courtesy, a sense of duty (which is very well defined), a sense of obligation and gratitude toward parents and respect for elders. This gave the Chinese a sense of social survival and family continuity, thus breeding a sense of family spirit, for which it is so easy to find parallels in the West.

¹⁴ The relationship between friends may be identified with the family, because friends are those who can be included in the family circle—"family friends."

With this type of philosophy, love was regarded by the Chinese people as the virtue of all virtues. Filial piety was not limited to the aged, living parents but extended to the dead in the form of ancestor veneration. Marriage was a sacred institution to be performed with solemn ceremonies of a religious character. Fecundity in childbearing was considered a special blessing from Heaven. Religion, in all forms, was respected. In a word, the family was the center of all social activities and the unifying force of humanity. In the family, people live together freely and happily without undue care for external factors.

With the enforcement of the communes under the Communist rule, however, everything was turned upside-down. The family system was broken.¹⁵ Hate, not love, became the dominating force of human society. The new order required children, first of all, to inform on and denounce their parents. To Communism, filial piety, parental love, morality and family were "feudalist," and, therefore, should be completely uprooted. In the time of Confucius, sons were advised not to act against their parents even if the latter had done something wrong.¹⁶ Now the reverse is true. The children were constantly encouraged to bring their parents to humiliation without any substantial charge. The new system considered that human individuals were nothing but the tools of the state. They must live and work collectively. Children were entrusted to state care. Old people were no longer respected. They were sent to "happy homes."¹⁷ In a word, the state is above all and controls all. The individual exists for the state, not the state for the individual.

¹⁵ The family, as such, is being eliminated, being replaced by what the Communists call the "big family." For instance, an article in the *Architectural Bulletin*, Peiping, October 30, 1958, tells of the big family in one district of Tientsin. Men and women were organized into a work battalion, constituting "a Socialist big family," which simply means no family at all.

¹⁶ On one occasion, a Duke observed to Confucius: "In my part of the country, there is a man so upright that when his father appropriated a sheep he bore witness to it." Confucius said: "The upright people in my part of the country are different from that, for a father will screen his son, and a son his father. In that there lies uprightness." (*Analects*, Book 13, Ch. 18:1-2.) This may be considered, from one point of view, as overdoing the principle of filial piety and parental love, but the fact that neither party wished to get the name of uprightness at the expense of the other is morally sound fundamentally.

¹⁷ In the article, "The New Stage of Rural Welfare," Wang Tsu-yi wrote: "Since the summer of 1958, rural welfare work has advanced by leaps and bounds. The 26,000 people's communes in the rural areas have set up 2,000,000 public service restaurants, 4,000,000 nurseries and kindergartens, and 110,000 homes for the aged." *People's Daily*, Peiping, January 6, 1959.

The communes have another purpose, that of liquidating the intellectual, the writer, and the thinking man. In the "Hundred Flowers" movement, the Red rulers had expected the writers and students to come out and criticize within the framework of "all roads leading to socialism." Instead of doing so, they came forth with an outpouring of resentment and revealed themselves as unalterably opposed to Communism. The proclaimed program of the commune system is to eliminate these writers and intellectuals entirely as a class. "We shall break down the former dreary situation in which we had to rely on a small number of 'authors,' " is the way it was expressed by Chen Chien-ping, director of the Honan Provincial Cultural Bureau, in an article on cultural activities in communes.¹⁸ After starting out by saying, "Politics must take command," he declares, "literary works must be purified. Among the rank and file of the cultural workers, we must achieve the combination of culture and art, politics and propaganda, and labor and production." Evidently, under the commune system, the intellectuals are suppressed and denied the right of independent thinking.

Another announced aim of the communes is to "communize" the national minorities. This, of course, can only aggravate their discontent. The Red press contains frequent allusions to the so-called nationalist movement in Sinkiang Province and Inner Mongolia, and to conditions of actual revolt as in the typical case of Tibet. Yet the greatest trouble caused by the communes is found within China proper.

How the communes function

Although the communes were not enforced on a nation-wide scale until August, 1958, they have already encountered serious difficulties. The causes of the trouble are several. In addition to adversity from natural disasters, the quick changeover from cooperative farms to communes and the pressure to push the "great leap forward" were largely responsible for the dislocation of the people. This in turn caused a breakdown of the Communists' system of distribution. A lack of skilled reapers in some producing areas, for example, resulted in late harvests and lost crops. Various industries suffered similar handicaps.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Wen-hui Pao* (The Literary Daily), Shanghai, November 2, 1958.

¹⁹ The Peiping correspondent of the Yugoslav Communist newspaper, *Borba*, reported on July 19, 1959, that thousands of Chinese industrial enterprises founded this year were being closed, and that "millions" of workers were being transferred from industry to agriculture.

The dissatisfaction of the people with the communes exists even today, everywhere in the mainland. The Communist periodical, *New Construction*, on September 3, 1958, tells of "depraved elements" that "seize every chance to spread rumors," and refers specifically to "sabotage activities," saying "these must be dealt with drastically." A writer in the brainwashing publication, *Study*, on September 10, 1958, admits that the "collectivization of housework will inevitably encounter difficulties and pass through struggle." However, the discontent with public mess halls had aggravated the people most. The acute food shortages led to hardship diets of approximately forty ounces of sweet potatoes and about two ounces of rice daily.²⁰ Even without these shortages, the operation of public mess halls which must handle several thousands of families is too difficult a task. The *People's Daily*, in its editorial of October 25, 1958, admitted:

Mistaken is the view that the proper operation of mess halls is a simple and easy routine task. In the first place, the matter is not simple. It is not easy even to become a good housewife, making a good job or preparing food for one family, so that all members of the family are satisfied. The operation of a mess hall catering to hundreds and thousands of people must then be a most complicated job.

In the second place, work in the mess hall is definitely not a simple routine task. The operation of the mess hall, and the enforcement of the system of collective eating, is a great question which involves the change of habits, in existence for thousands of years, of all the peasants. . . .

In addition to supplying the basic foods, a public mess hall must take into consideration local living habits, and supply various condiments, such as soy, vinegar, sauce, onions, leaks and pepper free of charge. . . . At present, generally speaking, an effort must be made to serve meat two or three times each month, and on festival days there should be a big dinner. . . .

The public mess hall must pay attention to hygiene: dinner tables and utensils must be washed after every meal and disinfected; the dining halls and kitchen must be regularly cleaned; rice must be thoroughly washed and then fully cooked; water must be boiled; rice and food must be kept warm; boiled water must be supplied at needed moments. . . .

The article ended with the warning that "the whole body of members of the commune must be educated so that they may raise their political vigilance to prevent the sabotage activities of bad elements." Similar

²⁰ *The New York Times*, July 20, 1959.

sentiments and preoccupations were expressed in other Communist papers.²¹

The difficulties facing the people's communes are, of course, not limited to the operation of the commune kitchens. They involve the entire political structure. Under the iron rule of the Communists, commune members produced less and less. This resulted in a serious shortage of daily necessities. Evidence is found in an article by a Communist writer under the title of "The Lining-Up and Socialism":

In these years, there is an outstanding phenomenon in the daily life of the people. This is the lining-up. Everyone has to line-up, whether he is shopping, going to a restaurant, visiting a hospital, having a haircut, seeing a movie, or riding on a bus or a train. . . . He must not only line-up, but line-up on a very long line, from one street to another. He has to spend a great deal of time waiting for his turn, sometimes from midnight to the next morning or from the early morning to the late afternoon. Further, the more people are on the line, the shorter will be the time for the operation of business or for service. . . .²²

Popular discontent led the Regime to make adjustments to the practices of the communes. This was manifested in the "Wuhan Conference" of the sixth plenary session of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held from November 28 to December 10, 1958.

The establishment of the communes in the rural areas was first adopted in the "Peitaiho Conference" of the Chinese Communist Party held on August 29, 1958. If we compare the resolutions resolved by this "Peitaiho Conference" with those of the "Wuhan Conference," we will readily understand the general retreat made by the Communists relative to the practices of the communes.

The "Peitaiho Conference" resolved that "the development has been very rapid, and it is quite possible that very soon a nation-wide high tide of the development of people's communes will arrive, a development which may become irresistible." The "Wuhan Conference" said the contrary. It made concessions and ordered the slowdown of the communal movement in cities.

A comparative study of these two resolutions may be listed as follows:²³

²¹ *Kuo Jen Jih Pao* (The Worker's Daily), Peiping, July 12, 1959.

²² "The Lining-Up and Socialism," *The People's Daily*, February 26, 1959.

²³ For a full text of the "Peitaiho Resolution" and of the "Wuhan Resolution" in English, see *Free China Review*, Taipei, Taiwan, January 1959.

	<i>Peitaiho Resolutions</i>	<i>Wuhan Resolutions</i>
Private property	Mostly confiscated, including houses, furniture, clothing, bedding, etc.	These "means of livelihood" should remain under private ownership.
Cash deposits	Mostly confiscated, since banks and credit cooperatives became part of commune organizations.	Deposits in banks and credit cooperatives should remain private.
Trees, small tools, small instruments	Mostly confiscated, for use in the commune's workshops and factories.	People may still keep them.
Raising poultry and small animals	Prohibited. All animals and poultry turned into commune property and put in commune animal farms.	People may still keep them.
Debts	Mostly cancelled, except those owed the State by the peasants.	Debts should be repaid when conditions permit, or otherwise "held over."
Working hours	From 14 to 17 hours daily.	The limit of 12 hours daily should not be exceeded.
Public mess hall	Everybody must eat there. No excuses. Private houses should not have stoves or fuel.	"Certain commune members may cook at home."
Nurseries and kindergartens	Compulsory for all. Parents may not take children away even at night.	"The parents may decide whether all children need to board there, and may take them back home at any time they wish."
Child labor	All children, even the very young, were made to work, sometimes in heavy manual labor.	"Children above the age of nine can take part in some kinds of labor to an appropriate extent so as to cultivate the habit of work."

What strikes us most in the "Wuhan Conference" are the resolutions condemning the malpractices of the communes:

Those who, because of failure to understand this, confuse the establishment of people's communes with the realization of ownership by the whole people and make any impetuous attempt to negate collective ownership in the countryside prematurely and hastily carry out a change over to ownership by the whole people, will be doing the wrong thing and therefore cannot succeed. . . .

We should not groundlessly make declarations that the people's communes in the countryside will "realize ownership by the whole people immediately," or even "enter communism immediately," and so on. To do such things is not only an expression of impetuosity, it will greatly lower the standards of communism in the minds of the people, distort the great ideal of communism and vulgarize it, strengthen the petty

bourgeois trend toward equalitarianism, and adversely affect the development of socialist construction.²⁴

These are serious accusations. Who has done "the wrong thing" and "distorted the ideal of communism"? Of course, Mao Tse-tung, the head, had to be blamed. This brought about Mao's resignation from his post as head of the Peiping regime in December, 1958.²⁵

Mao's resignation was designed to ease the conflict within the Party itself. It did not mean that he had actually lost his control. However, internal discontent with the communes was real. The "small freedom" granted to the peasants helped, in no way, to lessen the tensions. Communist Procurator-General Chang Ting-cheng of the "Supreme People's Procuratorate" reported to the first session of the second National People's Congress on April 24, 1959:

The procuratorates have at all times seen as the main task the taking of punitive action against sabotage activities pursued by counter-revolutionaries. In the 1955 struggle for the elimination of all counter-revolutionaries, in the 1957 struggle against lawless landlords, rich peasants and counter-revolutionaries, as well as sabotage activities carried out by bad elements, and in the course of the movement in 1958 to protect the giant forward leap and to bring about the people's communes, the spearhead of the struggle has always been pointed at active counter-revolutionaries carrying out sabotage activities as well as other criminal elements.

For the past four years, of all cases in which the procuratorates concerned have given approval for arrests and indictments, 70.8 percent involved active sabotage activities, while the remaining 29.2 percent involved counter-revolutionaries of long record who had committed monstrous crimes, had stirred up great indignation among the people, and had been drifting from one place to another in hiding. Facts have shown that socialist construction will suffer damages and that the interest of the masses will be left unprotected if punitive measures are not taken expeditiously against active sabotage by the enemies not exposed. We have been implementing the policy of punishment combined with leniency toward the counter-revolutionaries.²⁶

As a matter of fact, several Chinese Communist publications publicly expressed their opposition to the harsh measures of the communes.²⁷ Most critical of all is an article found in a Communist literary

²⁴ The "Wuhan Resolution," *op. cit.*, sec. 2.

²⁵ Mao's resignation was accepted by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party at its plenary session on December 10, 1958. The news was not made public until December 16, 1958.

²⁶ *New China News Agency*, Peiping, April 24, 1959.

²⁷ *The Chekiang Daily*, May 8, 1959, criticized the abrupt policy of the communes. In the *Hai Tai* magazine, No. 3 (1959), Chow Yu-yen, a Chinese Communist writer,

review, *Literature*.²⁸ It gives us details about child labor under the inhuman program of the commune system. The author, Ho Yi, wrote bitterly against the tendency to describe the heroism of children of the new generation by exaggerating their physical endurance and morale. He speaks of a publication entitled "Seven Generous Little Ones Move Mountains," in which children ranging from the ages of nine to fifteen form a work brigade in the digging of a well. These children worked for three months loading stones on ox-carts. The temperature was 40 degrees below zero, but the children, exposed to wind and snow, worked night and day. Their shoes and stockings froze to their feet. The skin of their hands clung to the icy stones that they picked up. At midnight, when other workers were relieved, they remained on the job. "This sort of description is horrible," wrote the literary critic, "and children who read it are not brought to love work but to find it insupportable."

The wave of opposition was largely responsible for calling the eighth plenary session of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party from August 2 to 16, 1959, in Lushan, known as the "Lushan Conference." General dissatisfaction had penetrated even to the highest Party circles, for only that could explain why the top leadership, at this "Lushan Conference," felt it necessary to admit that the figures for 1958, the year of the "great leap forward," were exaggerated:

*Peiping Statistical Retreat*²⁹
(millions of tons)

	1957 claims	False '58 claims	Revised '58 claims	1959 goals	New '59 goals
Food grains	185	375	250	525	275
Cotton	1.64	3.35	2.1	5	2.3
Coal	123.9	270	270	380	335
Steel	5.24	11	8	18	12

If these new figures are trustworthy, then the hardship of the communes would have produced only a 35% gain in grain, not the 102% Peiping had boasted of, and there had been a 28% increase in cotton, not 104%. Steel output, too, was not really doubled in the "beat Britain" campaign. Instead, much of the "steel" turned out in hastily built backyard furnaces was so poor in quality that it could not be used at all. And

published an article, "Had We Known Earlier We Would Not Have Done It," in which he said that the communes had "gone wrong."

²⁸ Ho Yi, Peiping, No. 10 (1959).

²⁹ *The New York Times*, August 27, 1959.

so on down the list. With this deflation of the record comes a drastic scaling down of 1959 targets as hopelessly beyond reach.

Official announcement put the blame for false figures on "lack of experience in assessing and calculating output." Between the lines we can read a bitter admission that the commune system had resulted only in pushing China's luckless peasants beyond their endurance.

After the publication of the corrected figures for agrarian production in 1958, the Party was directed "at all levels to criticize and overcome resolutely such erroneous ideas among the cadres."³⁰ The *People's Daily* editorial said with a bitter tone: "It can be foreseen that imperialist elements and enemies within the country will not stop their attacks. . . . The corrected agrarian production figures for 1958 and the changed plan of 1959, and even our criticism of rightist tendency, will be used by them to clamour in all kinds of ways."³¹ Red China's Premier, Chou En-lai, defended the communes in a speech published on August 29, 1959. He said that faults of "overcentralization in administration, equalitarianism in distribution and extravagance" had been overcome. *Hongqi*³² (Red Flag) admitted that there had been serious difficulties within the party about the communes and the general pace of Chinese economic development. In an article published on August 30, 1959, the journal encouraged a nation-wide campaign against the critics, whom the review called "Rightist opportunists."

In the process of our "leap forward" and change to "People's communes," enemy elements hostile to our country's socialist cause, both inside and outside our land, raised howls and clamours.

When the control figures (goals) of the second five-year plan were published, the imperialists and enemy elements within the country insisted these figures were "unrealistic." . . . they have been trying in vain to shake our confidence by such talk. . . .

The critics feared a popular revolt against the regime, and were always feeling worried lest something might happen and always complaining and even reproaching that 'excesses' occur in the mass movement, being as scared of a mass movement as of a conflagration. . . .

The party and people throughout the country will undoubtedly struggle resolutely to overcome such Rightist opportunist ideas.

The denunciation of "Rightist opportunists" may expand, but so far it has not assumed the character of a major campaign such as the anti-

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, editorial.

³² *Hongqi* (Red Flag) is a fortnightly ideological journal of the Chinese Communist Party.

Right drive of 1957-58. The present outcry may indicate that if there is revolt in the party high command, Mao has, for the time being at least, won out. How and when a real split in the Chinese Communist leadership may develop one can only guess.

One thing seems clear. The commune system has experienced insurmountable difficulties. These difficulties existed under the cooperative system, but they become more serious with the communes. Like the cooperatives, the communes are confronted with several contradictions, particularly those between the communes and the state. The Communists expressed grave concern for the "self-centered" attitude of the communes which would severely damage the interest of national economy as a whole:

The question of producing goods for self-consumption and exchange is closely related with equal and simultaneous emphasis on industry and agriculture. Of course, a people's commune must develop production to meet its own needs and the livelihood of its members. However, no commune, even those with the best conditions, can produce all the things it needs, nor is it necessary to do so. The economy of the entire country is an integral one. Each locality and each commune should develop its own production and assist others based on the local natural conditions and its specialty. This is the most economical and rational kind of labor division in a society. There is no necessity, nor is it possible, for any commune to "live by itself behind closed doors" and to be "self-sustaining and self-sufficient." In our country now, commodities are still very scarce. The production and exchange of commodities is still not well developed. Therefore, the development of production and exchange of commodities will continue to be our economic policy for a rather long time.³⁸

Of the many articles written about the difficulties of the communes, we choose a particular one by Wang Ya-nan, an old Marxist scholar, and an expert on economic questions. The article shows that after all the Party line was right. Reading between the lines, we discover that the too abrupt introduction of the communes upset the already precarious balance of the national economy. Speaking of shortages in daily commodities and industrial raw materials, Wang had this to say:

People must understand that an all-comprehensive great leap must give rise to a chain reaction of tensions in various degrees in all fields of a country which has poor economic foundations and in which production is not yet developed. . . .

Yes, it is true that the outstanding characteristic of our socialist economy is planning, that all work must be done according to planned propor-

³⁸ "The Direction of the Development of Production of the People's Communes," *The People's Daily*, January 2, 1959.

tionate development. But, speaking of this, we ought to remember that the construction of our country has been going on at the same time as, and parallel with, the transformation of agriculture, of handicraftsmen and of capitalist commerce and industry, was accomplished only in rough outline. Then in the second half of 1958, there appeared an entirely new socialist production relation in the people's communes. This has involved a very great change in the entire national economy and has brought with itself strong fluctuations in the equilibrium between the various fields of national economy. This is the point of view from which we should look at the shortages of raw materials and also at the shortages of consumption goods.³⁴

This, in plain terms, means that for all the Communists' vaunted planning, there has been a baffling instability in economic policy. The construction of a modern economy in mainland China has been repeatedly upset by new experiments and changes in programs and objectives. The establishment of the commune system, above all, fell with catastrophic force upon the Chinese people.

Most serious of all is the discontent of the armed forces toward the commune system. Two things stand out. In the first place, officers and men in the army have long been unhappy over the extent to which military men are employed as a work force. Much of the time of service men is given over to growing food, raising pigs, building irrigation canals, clearing wasteland, collecting manure and acting as mechanics and general handymen. Throughout the year 1958, the army was assigned the task of helping to establish the communes. Many officers and men had to take over the virtually full-time job of solving organizational and production problems. It is estimated that military personnel in Communist China have only 145 days out of the year to devote to training and military study. Secondly, not all the personnel of the army is incorporated into communal life. Exceptions are found in generals and high-ranking officers. They still enjoy their private family life as usual. This constitutes a serious contradiction between this "new class" and the rest of the officers and service men in the armed forces. This disaffection was revealed in a major upheaval of top-level Chinese Communist military personnel.³⁵ The appoint-

³⁴ *People's Daily*, August 31, 1959.

³⁵ *New York Times*, September 19, 1959. Lin Piao, who succeeded Peng Teh-huai as Red China's Minister of Defense, warned against "bourgeois Rightists tendencies" and said the armed services must continue to be "a labor force as well as a combat organization." (*The People's Daily*, September 30, 1959.) This statement seemed to give support to the belief that discontent existed in Communist China's military services, which oppose extensive use of the armed forces for construction factories and construction work. Lin's appointment to replace Peng Teh-huai may mean that the latter shed the dissatisfaction in the ranks of the military.

ment of Lo Jui-ching, Red China's head of secret and regular police forces, as Army Chief of Staff indicates the growing strain in the military circles. It was necessary to place the Police Chief in charge of the army to stamp out "insecure elements."

Concluding Remarks

Although there is no convincing evidence of an immediate inner revolt in mainland China, the Red government does have real troubles. The following conclusions are obvious:

1. The communes failed to make the transition from collective ownership to "all-people" ownership. Under the pre-commune system there were 752,000 cooperatives. The intention was to reduce these cooperatives to 26,425 communes. In reality, the communes did not work. A further transition was made to some 500,000 production brigades. This means, in fact, that the production ownership under the new system is only about one-third less than that under the cooperatives.

2. The communes failed to advance China's society from a socialist to a Communist society. When the communes were first instituted, it was thought that they would be "the best organizational form for the gradual transition from socialism to Communism."³⁶ Now nothing more is being said about an immediate transition to Communism. The *People's Daily* in the article "Long Live the People's Communes" of August 29, 1959, said: "The name of the communes may still be associated with Communism. Yet they may also be disassociated with it. In other words, there may exist some communes which are not in conformity with the characteristics of Communism."

3. The communes failed to bring about the collectivization of daily life. This is evident in the operation of public mess halls and nurseries. Now "certain members may cook at home" and "the parents may decide whether the children need to board there, and may take them back home at any time they wish."³⁷ Without the collectivization of daily living, it is extremely difficult for people to carry on their collective production originally envisaged by the communes.

³⁶ The "Peitaiho Resolution," *op. cit.*, sec. 5, art. 2, of the "Provisional Regulations of the Sputnik People's Commune" reads: "The policy of the People's Commune is to consolidate the socialist system and strenuously create conditions for gradual transition to the Communist system."

³⁷ The "Wuhan Resolution," *op. cit.*, sec. 5.

4. The communes failed to increase production. The fiasco of the "backyard furnace" and of the "great leap forward," which resulted in the humiliating publication of the corrected figures, is clear evidence of this fact.

From the "Peitaiho Conference" (August 1958), which established the communes, to the "Wuhan Conference" (November 1958), which offered certain compromises, and to the "Lushan Conference" (August 1959), which admitted the failures and revealed inner conflicts about the communes, the Communist hierarchy has gone from one impasse to another.

More accurate assessment of Communist China's troubles caused by the communes must await the evolution of events. So far, Peiping's attempts at complete communization of life, through communal mess halls, the dispersion of peasant families and the near-suppression of wages, have failed in the face of stubborn resistance. At the outset, the opposition was generally limited to the peasants. Now the tensions are higher. Disaffection is found not only among the common people but also among the party cadres and the armed forces. An anti-Mao force may gradually emerge within the party. While one clique calls its opponents "Rightist conservatives" or "Rightist opportunists," the other calls its enemy "Leftist adventurists." The crisis is real. However, the communes will, we are sure, continue to be emphasized and hardened.³⁸ The Communists can hardly drop the system altogether without the most serious political consequences. This means that there will be continued reliance on the communes, with possible tightening up of the organizational structure after the present relaxation has served its purpose. A precedent can be found in the land reform program. Through the alternate use of hardening and relaxing, the Communists were able to bring the reform to their preconceived aims. They know very well just how far and in which direction the peasants can be pushed and when an interval of relaxation becomes essential. Therefore, the present modification of the commune system indicates not a general retreat from all-over program but a temporary tactical measure.

It is still Mao and a small group around him who hold the supreme power. These men are striving to remedy the precarious situation caused

³⁸ Red China's Premier, Chou En-lai, told the Supreme State Conference, a body made up of leaders of the Communist and minor parties and other prominent individuals, that Communist China would pursue a tough political and economic line for "utmost efforts to go forward, opposing rightist conservatism, increasing production and practicing economy." (Peiping Radio broadcast, August 25, 1959.)

by the communes. They hit back vigorously at those who persist in criticism. How long they can maintain the power, we do not know. How far the Chinese Communists can still go with the commune system, we also do not know. What we do know is that with more than 95 percent of the peasants organized into cooperatives the Reds still could not achieve their objectives. The basic reason is that the cooperatives killed the family spirit. How, then, can they expect to succeed with this new organization which aims at a more radical destruction of the family? Stalin's forced collectivization of Russian agriculture in the 1930's—a program less radical than the establishment of the Chinese communes—was achieved only at the cost of more than ten million Russian lives. Whether Mao can succeed without meeting resistance on a similar scale in China remains to be seen.

It cannot be denied that, in the economic field and in agriculture, Communist China has made certain advances, by introducing improved techniques and, above all, by working the peasants to the verge of exhaustion. However, how much of a loss of family identity and individual freedom the Chinese people are willing to trade for these external things is something which cannot be eliminated from reckoning. With all its organizational strength, the Regime has, therefore, a permanent undertone of weakness. Popular support for the Red government is at its lowest ebb since 1949. Indeed, it has been deteriorating during recent years.

For the present, we must accept the fact that China is being transformed by Communism. Right now in Red China, there is taking place, through force and fear, the greatest social transformation of our time. Throughout the ages, China has been always confronted with three major problems: those concerning the farmers, the intellectuals and the national minorities. The success or failure in dealing with these problems, especially that of the farmers, determines the fate of a dynasty or a ruler. The difficulties that the Reds are facing today are the same as of old. Yet, instead of overcoming them, the Regime tends to aggravate them. After the cooperatives had failed, the Red hierarchy introduced the communes. The situation has gone from bad to worse. To bring about the necessary mechanization and industrialization of the farms, Communist China needs more foreign capital and technology than she has received from Russia and East European Communist nations.³⁹ However, she cannot accept

³⁹ China's economic dependence on the Soviet Union is obvious. For the last few years, Moscow has been sending to China capital goods and other essentials valued at about \$200,000,000 annually. Li Hsien-nien, Red China's Minister of Finance and

the material help of the Western democratic countries without exposing herself to the influence of Western democratic ideas. This is a dilemma which causes the Red Regime to resort to the accumulation of domestic funds for construction and, most of all, to the "self-sustaining" system of communes which exploits human power to an inhuman degree.

Speaking of the dreaded commune system, John M. H. Lindbeck observes:

For the foreseeable future the regime has committed itself, not to leading but to driving the people by means of systems of organized pressure and persuasion to develop an industrial, political and military base for Chinese power. As dedicated Communist totalitarians, the leaders of the regime, while showing occasional signs of wavering in their policy, have never seriously considered any other course. Human needs, cultural traditions and social preferences are subordinated to the regime's demands for maximum national power.⁴⁰

This Chinese Communist drive for power stands as a permanent threat to human freedom and also as a constant source of troubles. With overwhelming doses of indoctrination and party pressure, every Chinese citizen on the mainland has been brought to obey, and even to proclaim his approval. Otherwise, he would not earn his livelihood. As Robert Guillain, Far East correspondent of the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, puts it in his article, "After Ten Years of Communism: Red China," "No freedom and more work and hardships—such is the inevitable program, probably for years to come. This in turn breeds more discontent, and discontent brings stricter discipline, from brainwashing to prison and forced labor, sometimes death. Then more discontent arises. The permanent by-product of revolution becomes counter-revolution—that is, sporadic opposition."⁴¹ Although organized opposition seems to be a remote possibility, because of the impossibility of organizing, resistance has been there beneath the surface—among all walks of life. Intellectuals have been one of the major causes of headaches for the leaders, for best brains are difficult to brainwash. They remain as "intransigent" as ever. Discontent

member of the twenty-man Politburo of the Communist Party, said that foreign loans have made up only 2 percent of the country's total revenue since the Communist regime was proclaimed ten years ago. "We have essentially relied on the accumulation of domestic funds for reconstruction." (*The People's Daily*, September 29, 1959.)

⁴⁰ John M. H. Lindbeck, "The China Problem Today," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Philadelphia, January 1959, p. 12.

⁴¹ Robert Guillain, "After Ten Years of Communism: Red China," *The New York Times* (magazine section), September 27, 1959, pp. 4 ff.

of the national minorities exists everywhere in the border regions, as can be seen in the uprising of Tibetan peoples.

Being denied the satisfaction of the traditional values which have been imbedded in their culture for centuries, the Chinese people have not been able to accept those offered by the new order. The result is growing apathy and resentment in a people who "live and work without heart." This means, in fact, that the basic defect of the Chinese commune system lies, not in the shift of policies or of external factors, but rather in its essential false relationship to human nature.

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